



February 2007

Charity No. 1099250

ISSUE 19

**Mozart Concert**by  
**David Ruddock and Friends**

On Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> December we were given an enjoyable evening, presented by the well known local classical pianist David Ruddock and Friends. David shared various anecdotes with his characteristic energy and enthusiasm about the composer's life and works of Mozart with an audience of nearly a hundred, in the Birchington Village Centre. He described when as a child prodigy Mozart wrote his first symphony at the age of eight and his first opera when only nine years old.

The programme primarily celebrated Mozart's 250<sup>th</sup> birthday, although some Shostakovich works were also included. David's 13 year old daughter Imogen, playing violin, gave an outstanding performance when accompanying her father with Mozart's Eine Kleine Nachtmusik.

The evening concluded with the entire company singing and playing Mozart's Allelujah.



The musicians from left to right were:-

John Chappell - Clarinet  
Laura Duffy – Soprano  
Christine Chappell – flute  
Imogen Ruddock— Violin and  
David Ruddock—piano (seated)

**Stamps of Kent**by  
**Dr. Bob Hinge**

A fascinating talk with illustrations was presented by Dr. Bob Hinge on Friday 24<sup>th</sup> of November 2006. He outlined the history of the postal service dating back to 1660, in the reign of King Charles II, with the formation of the General Letter Office. In those times a recipient would have to pay to receive a letter. He then moved on to 1840 when Sir Roland Hill introduced the penny post, where the sender paid for the postage in advance, so overcoming the difficulties many experienced in paying to receive a letter.

Bob also explained how the Penny Black was replaced with the Penny Red to enable the stamp to be effectively cancelled with indelible black ink since the original red cancelling ink could be washed out and allowing the stamp to be reused.

Many images of stamps were projected on to a screen including early airmails also various commemorative and definitive issues. One stamp portrayed the Hovercraft which was frequently seen around Thanet's coast during the 1960s.

Bob explained why there are mostly images of Royals printed onto British stamps with only a few exceptions. The talk concluded with a tongue-in-cheek image of an possible stamp commemorating Birchington.

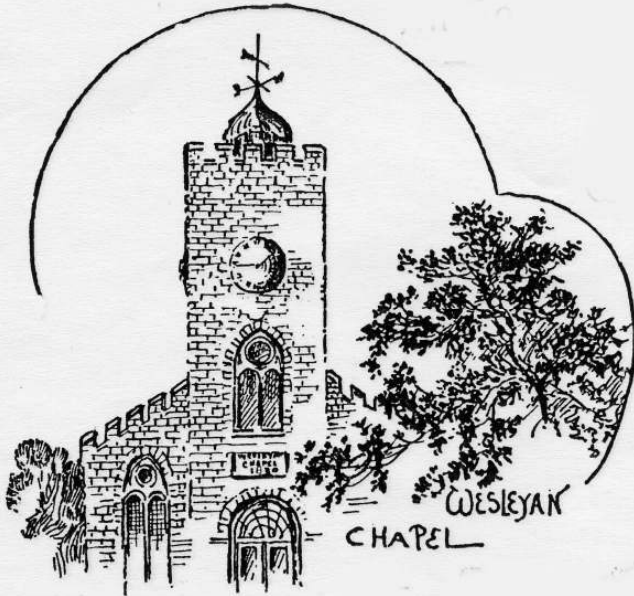
**Wine & Wisdom a great success**

In spite of a snowy start to the evening, 82 contestants braved the elements to experience an enjoyable evening of Wine and Wisdom on Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> January. The event was organised by Gillian Lodge and her hard working Social Committee of the Birchington Heritage Trust. The score was close between the winners (The "Teachers" Table) and those less successful. The real winners were the Trust who were better off by £211.50 at the end of the evening.

Chairman, Neville Hudson, gave a vote of thanks to the Question Master, Howard Willcome, to Dot Raven and her daughter, Kay, who set the questions, marked the answer sheets and kept the score, also the Social Committee's efforts.



Methodists have had a presence in the village since as early as 1778, initially meeting in each other's homes. When it was felt that there were enough members to support a purpose-built chapel, they set about raising funds. The Methodist Chapel was eventually built in 1830 and has been tended and cared for ever since by a stalwart band of members.



*This drawing was made just over a hundred years later in 1933.*

### Museum Opening Hours

The Birchington Heritage Trust Museum is situated on the first floor of Birchington Village Centre

open on

**Monday Mornings**

9.30 to 12.00pm

also

**First Saturday of every month**

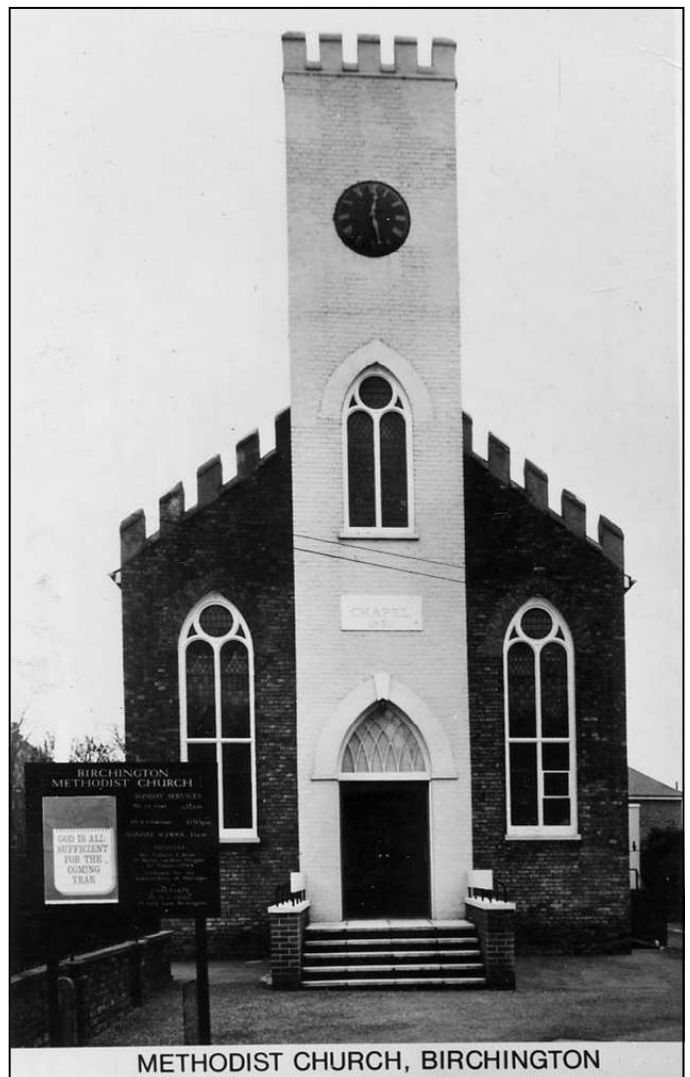
9.30 am to 12.00 pm

Come along and see how much we have to offer to help you discover the past history of Birchington-on Sea.

At the opening of the Chapel on September 16th the Rev. John Jones and the Rev. William Naylor, both from London, preached in the 'forenoon and afternoon respectively'. The amount of collections during those opening services was £75 10s, a huge sum for those days. Another £132 6s was subscribed towards the erection of the chapel. Mr Tomlin stood surety for all the costs until he could be repaid - without interest.

In 1883 the Rev. Thomas Perfect, one of its Victorian ministers, owned Yew Tree House, just across the road from the Chapel. He also owned the little plot of land behind Evergreen (now The Smugglers) and built a terrace of five houses on it, now known as Perfect Cottages.

During the 1930s the Pantony family were strong supporters of the chapel. They have lent us a collection of photos of the wonderful Harvest displays the ladies used to arrange, as well as other official and social events during that time.



METHODIST CHURCH, BIRCHINGTON

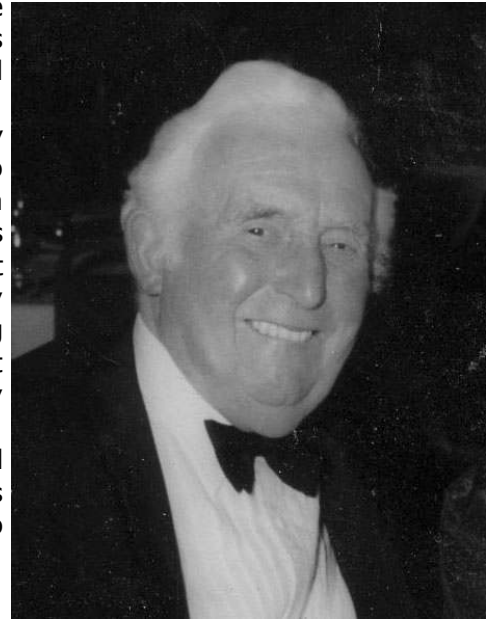
*This photo shows it in c. 1960, before the whole building was painted white.*

**"A Life Well Spent" by Alf Bedwell  
edited by Jennie Burgess**

**A**lf Bedwell's story of his life is now available for £10 and can be bought from Glen Patrick, Estate Agent in Station Road. He is generously prepared to do this for Iris and the Trust at no financial benefit to his business. We are extremely grateful for this kindness.

The story of Alf's life makes interesting reading, partly because he lived so much of it in and around the village, but also because of his war service during WW2. This section covers a momentous event which was hushed up on Winston Churchill's orders until quite recently. He tells his story with a delightful, quiet humour and reveals a man with a variety of interests and a way with words which only few people were privileged to share during his busy life. One of his burning passions was motorised transport and another was carpentry, both of which he was able to enjoy almost to the very last.

Sadly he died before he could see his book in print, but he and Iris have always supported the Birchington Heritage Trust, so it was decided by Iris and her family in America to donate all the profits to the Trust. Thank you Iris.



**RON OLIVER - A Tribute**

**W**e are sorry to announce the death of Ron Oliver a long-time resident of Birchington. His job as a Butcher in Station Road covered many years and his kindness and humour with his customers was well known and much appreciated.

In his younger days he was involved in the running of the Birchington Swimming Club for a very long time and was still heading it when it finally folded just a short while ago. It was through his thoughtfulness that Birchington Heritage Trust was one of the beneficiaries of the accumulated funds. Despite having to battle with acute emphysema, he came personally to the Village Centre in 2005 to present the cheques. All of us were touched by his courage and good humour despite his difficulties.

The members of the Trust Committee would like to extend their deepest sympathy to Ron's widow and daughter in their sad loss. We shall all miss his enthusiasm for Birchington, both past and present.

Jennie Burgess



*Ron Oliver's  
Butcher's shop (right)  
in the early 1960s*



*Greensted's in 1931-2  
Ron Oliver took over this butcher's shop*

## Many Thanks

to Birchington Parish Council for their donation of £500 which contributes towards the rental costs of the Museum. The money was gratefully received at the end of last year by the Trustees.

## Future Events in 2007

### Bingo and American Supper

Bring your own food to eat and share

**Friday 4<sup>th</sup> May**  
7.00 for 7.30 p.m.  
£4.00 includes 2 books

### General Meeting

**M. E. Steel**  
**Public Information Films 1939 - 1945**  
**29<sup>th</sup> March - 7.30pm**

### Annual General Meeting

**Malcolm Finnis**  
**"Aviation in Kent"**

Having worked for  
Air Ferry and Invicta Airways

**7.30pm - 24<sup>th</sup> May 2007**

all meetings held at  
**The Birchington Village Centre**

## A gentle reminder

Subscriptions will be due in May

They are the life blood of this Trust

We thank all our Members for your ongoing support.

It enables us to continue with this project which will help preserve past material for future generations.

## WHO, WHERE and WHEN?



**W**e had been given this image, but need to know who the lady is and where she is standing. Looking at the style of her uniform, it looks as if it is possibly during WW2 - but hopefully someone will be able to clear up the mystery. It came to us via the Cox family who were Birchington residents for many years. They felt sure it was taken in Birchington, but the distinctive building behind is not familiar to us.

If you have any clues or suggestion please let Jennie Burgess know at 6 Alpha Road, 842988

## Second Edition Booklets

Yes, Jennie has again been busy again! This time she has produced some "New Improved" reprints of the Trust's original booklets. These are available from the BHT Museum.

The Titles are:-

**Church Street**

**Church Yard**

**Twix 2 Taverns**

**Library to Chapel**